

Functional Outcomes

Early Child Outcomes Are Functional: Characteristics of functional outcomes include:

- Things which are meaningful to the child in the context of everyday living.
- An integrated series of behaviors or skills that allow the child to achieve the early child outcomes.
- Emphasize how the child is able to integrate (behaviors) across developmental domains to carry out complex meaningful behaviors.
- Functional outcomes are not (1) a single behavior, (2) the sum of a series of discrete behaviors, (3) based on developmental domains (like on many assessments), and (4) not trying to separate child development into discrete areas (communication, gross motor, cognitive, etc.)

Thinking about young children's outcomes from a functional framework requires a shift from a more traditional viewpoint of child development.

Thinking Functionally (within age-expected bounds)	
Not just.....	But does he/she.....
Know how to make eye contact, smile, and give a hug →	Initiate affection toward caregivers and respond to others affection?
Know how to imitate a gesture when prompted by others →	Watch what a peer says or does and incorporate it into his/her own play?
Use finger in pointing motion →	Point to indicate needs or wants?
Show a skill in a specific situation →	Use a skill in actions across settings and situations to accomplish something meaningful to the child?
Items to Consider When Measuring Functional Outcomes	
What does the child typically do?	
What is the child's actual performance across settings and situations?	
How the child uses his/her skills to accomplish tasks?	
It is not assessing the child's capacity to function under ideal circumstances.	

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Disabilities Services Division,
Developmental Disabilities Program (March, 2006) *Early Child Outcomes: Demonstrating and
Reporting the Results of Early Intervention Services for Infants and Toddlers.*